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Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 46

Progress on Economic Opportunities

Mr S A Zulu (Mpumalanga: MKP) to ask the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition:

(a) What measurable progress has his department made in creating economic opportunities for (i) women, (ii) previously disadvantaged individuals and (iii) persons with disabilities and (b) how he addresses criticisms to slow implementation? CW46E

REPLY:

(a) The Incentive Branch, within the department, offers cost-sharing reimbursable grants to South African registered businesses. To create more economic opportunities for (ii) previously disadvantaged individuals, all applying and approved businesses must be B-BBEE compliant as per the applicable incentive guideline. In fact, for the 2023/24 financial year, 88% of companies that received disbursements from the Incentive Branch and two of the department's industrial financing entities, the Industrial Development Corporation and the National Empowerment Fund, were level 1 to 4 B-BBEE compliant. All three institutions disbursed funding of R5.2 billion to black industrialists and black-owned businesses over the same period.

To create more economic opportunities for (i) women and (iii) persons with disabilities, some incentives administered by the Branch such as the Manufacturing Support Programme, Aquaculture Development and Enhancement Programme, the Export Market Investment Assistance scheme and the Support Programme for Industrial Innovation offer a higher percentage of grant funding for women and persons with disabilities. Of specific mention, is the National Empowerment Fund that administers the Women Empowerment Fund which is aimed at accelerating the provision of funding to black women-owned business. During the 2023/24 financial year, all three institutions disbursed over R200 million to women-owned businesses.

While higher grant funding is aimed to attract businesses owned by persons with disabilities, the take-up of businesses in this category is almost negligible.

- (b) The Incentives Branch has successfully implemented the platform for economic activities not only for women and persons with disabilities, but for all types of business. To increase up-take of incentive programmes, the Strategic Partnership and Customer Care unit within the branch oversees the dissemination of incentive information and the marketing of incentive programs targeting all business and importantly, companies owned by women and persons with disabilities as a mechanism to improve interest to the target groups. More favourable uptake is largely dependent on their participation in relevant incentive programs.

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